

# The Manager Of the B. & A.

By VAUGHAN KESTER

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## CHAPTER III.

OAKLEY took the satchel from General Cornish's hand as the latter stepped from his private car.

"You got my note, I see," he said. "I think I'll go to the hotel for the rest of the night."

He glanced back over his shoulder as he turned with Dan toward the bus which was waiting for them at the end of the platform.

"I guess no one else got off here. It's not much of a railroad center."

"No," agreed Oakley impartially; "there are towns where the traffic is heavier."

Arrived at the hotel, Oakley led the way upstairs to the general's room. It adjoined his own. Cornish paused on the threshold until he had lighted the gas.

"Light the other burner, will you?" he requested. "There, thanks, that's better."

He was a portly man of sixty, with a large head and heavy face. His father had been a Vermont farmer, a man of position and means according to the easy standard of his times. When the civil war broke out young Cornish, who was just commencing the practice of the law, had enlisted as a private in one of the first regiments raised by his state. Prior to this he had overworked with fervid oratory and had tried hard to look like Daniel Webster, but a skirmish or two opened his eyes to the fact that the wearing of a war was a sober business and the polishing off of his sentences not nearly as important as the polishing off of the enemy. He was still willing to die for the Union if there was need of it, but while his life was spared it was well to get on. The numerical importance of number one was a belief too firmly implanted in his nature to be overthrown by any patriotic aberration.

His own merits, which he was among the first to recognize, and the solid backing his father was able to give won him promotion. He had risen to the command of a regiment, and when the war ended was brevetted a brigadier general of volunteers along with a score of other anxious warriors who wished to carry the title of general back into civil life, for he was an amiable sort of a Shylock, who seldom overlooked his pound of flesh, and he usually got all and a little more than was coming to him.

After the war he married and went west, where he resumed the practice of his profession, but he soon abandoned it for a commercial career. It was not long until he was ranked as one of the rich men of his state. Then he turned his attention to politics. He was twice elected to congress and served one term as governor. One of his daughters had married an Italian prince, a meek, prosaic little creature exactly five feet three inches tall. Another was engaged to an English earl, whose debts were a remarkable achievement for so young a man. His wife now divided her time between Paris and London. She didn't think much of New York, which had thought even less of her. He managed to see her once or twice a year. Any oftener would have been superfluous.

There were moments, however, when he felt his life to be wholly unsatisfactory. He derived very little pleasure from all the luxury that had accumulated about him and which he accepted with a curious placid indifference. He would have liked the affection of his children, to have had them at home, and there was a remote period in his past when his wife had inspired him with a sentiment at which he could only wonder. He held it against her that she had not understood.

He lurched down solidly into the chair Oakley placed for him. "I hope you are comfortable here," he said kindly.

"Oh, yes." He still stood. "Sit down," said Cornish. "I don't, as a rule, believe in staying up after midnight to talk business, but I must start east tomorrow."

He slipped out of his chair and began to pace the floor, with his hands thrust deep in his trousers pockets. "I want to talk over the situation here. I don't see that the road is ever going to make a dollar. I've an opportunity to sell it to the M. & W. Of course this is extremely confidential. It must not go any further. I am told they will discontinue it beyond this point, and of course they will either move the shops away or close them." He paused in his rapid walk. "It's too bad I never paid. It was the first thing I did when I came west. I thought it a pretty big thing then. I have always hoped it would justify my judgment, and it promised to for awhile until the lumber interests played out. Now, what do you advise, Oakley? I want to get your ideas. You understand if I sell I won't lose much. The price offered will just about meet the mortgage I hold, but I guess the stockholders will come out at the little end of the horn."

Oakley understood exactly what was ahead of the stockholders if the road changed hands. Perhaps his face showed that he was thinking of this, for the general observed charitably:

"It's unfortunate, but you can't mix sentiment in a transaction of this sort. I'd like to see them all get their money back, and more too."

His mental attitude toward the world was one of generous liberality, but he had such excellent control over his impulses that, while he always seemed about to embark in some large

philanthropy, he had never been known to take even the first step in that direction. In short, he was hard and unemotional, but with a deceptive, unswerving kindness of manner which, while it had probably never involved a dollar of his riches, had at diverse times cost the unwary and the indiscreet much money.

"I am sure the road could be put on a paying basis," said Oakley. "Certain quite possible economies would do that. Of course we can't create business; there is just so much of it, and we get it all as it is. But the shops might be made very profitable. I have secured a good deal of work for them and I shall secure more. I had intended to propose a number of reforms, but if you are going to sell, why, there's no use of going into the matter"—He paused.

The general meditated in silence for a moment.

"I'd hate to sacrifice my interests if I thought you could even make the road pay expenses. Now, just what do you intend to do?"

"I'll get my order book and show you what's been done for the shops," said Oakley, rising with alacrity. "I have figured out the changes, too, and you can see at a glance just what I propose doing."

The road and the shops employed some 500 men, most of whom had their homes in Antioch. Oakley knew that if the property was sold it would practically wipe the town out of existence. The situation was full of interest for him. If Cornish approved and told him to go ahead with his reforms, it would be an opportunity such as he had never known.

He went into his own room, which opened off Cornish's, and got his order book and table of figures, which he had carried up from the office that afternoon.

He had taken a great deal of pains with his figures, and they seemed to satisfy Cornish that the road if properly managed was not such a hopeless proposition after all. Something might be done with it.

Oakley rose in his good esteem. He had liked him, and he was justifying his good opinion. He beamed benevolently on the young man and thawed out of his habitual reserve into a genial, ponderous frankness.

"You have done well," he said, glancing through the order book, with evident satisfaction.

"Of course," explained Oakley. "I am going to make a cut in wages this spring if you agree to it, but I haven't the figures for this yet." The general nodded. He approved of cuts on principle.

"That's always a wise move," he said. "Will they stand it?" "They'll have to," and Oakley laughed rather nervously. He appreciated that his reforms were likely to make him very unpopular in Antioch. "They shouldn't object. If the road changes hands it will kill their town."

"I suppose so," agreed Cornish indifferently.

"And half a loaf is lots better than no bread," added Oakley. Again the general nodded his approval.

"What sort of shape is the shop in?" he asked after a moment's silence.

"Very good on the whole." "I am glad to hear you say so. I spent over a hundred thousand dollars on the plant originally."

"Of course the equipment can hardly be called modern, but it will do for the sort of work for which I am bidding," Oakley explained.

"Well, it will be an interesting problem for a young man, Oakley. If you pull the property up it will be greatly to your credit. I was going to offer you another position, but we will let that go over for the present. I am very much pleased, though, with all you have done; very much pleased indeed. I go abroad in about two weeks. My youngest daughter is to be married in London to the Earl of Minchester." The title rolled glibly from the great man's lips. "So you'll have the fight, if it is a fight, all to yourself. I'll see that Holloway does what you say. He's the only one you'll have to look to in my absence, but you won't be able to count on him for anything. He gets limp in a crisis. Just don't make the mistake of asking his advice."

"I'd rather have no advice," interrupted Dan hastily. "Unless it's yours," he added.

"I'll see that you are not bothered. You are the sort of fellow who will do better with a free hand, and that is what I intend you shall have."

"Thank you," said Oakley, his heart warming with the other's praise.

"I shall be back in three months, and then if your schemes have worked out at all as we expect, why, we can consider putting the property in better shape." (A part of Oakley's plan.) "As you say, it's gone down so there won't be much but the right of way presently."

"I hope that eventually there'll be profits," said Oakley, whose mind was beginning to reach out into the future. "I guess the stockholders will drop dead if we ever earn a dividend. That's the last thing they are looking forward to," remarked Cornish dryly. "Will you leave a 6.30 call at the office for me? I forgot, and I must take the first train. Good night."

(To Be Continued.)

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## AFTER NUDE IN ART.

Anthony Comstock Thinks Prospectus of Institution Immoral.

New York, Aug. 6.—Upon a warrant sworn out by Anthony Comstock, secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, the studios of the Art Students' League, one of the most noted art schools in America, were today searched, and the bookkeeper, Miss Anna Robinson, was placed under arrest. It was charged by agents of the society that the reproduction of figures in the nude contained in the full catalogue which the league was about to issue were of an immoral character. A patrol wagon load of the catalogues was seized and taken to the police court as evidence. Magistrate Mayo adjourned for a further hearing on August 7 the charges against Miss Robinson, the only person placed under arrest. The pamphlet seized by the society's agents is the one issued regularly each fall to prospective students, and shows pictures of the work turned out by the students of the school. The issue is styled "The American Student of Art," and specimens pictured are such as are seen in any art studio museum. In the book there are but two pages devoted to the nude. The Art Students' League maintains in 215 West Fifty-seventh street studios and apartments for explanations in fine arts. No question has ever been raised before as to the character of the pamphlets issued or of the art exhibited.

## LAST WEEK OF STOCK.

Casino Company Disbands Saturday Night and Opera Follows.

This is the last week of melodrama at the Wallace park Casino, as Manager William Malone's players leave to fill winter engagements. On Monday the Beggar Prince Opera company opens, and will present four different operas a week during the engagement. This attraction will be followed by a season of vaudeville. The moving pictures will continue to be a feature at the park, and some pictures of the Frisco disaster will shortly be produced.

Melodrama is the bill at the Casino this week, and the popularity of the show last week will be duplicated.

One of the items that went to make this season so popular was the excellent settings of the pieces. Manager Malone, who is a past-master at stage dressing, has used the limited equipment of the summer to the best advantage.

Members of the stock company, as well as patrons of the house, were sorry to see G. W. Harrington, the popular comedian, leave. After playing the part of "Rastus" in the "Heart of Kentucky," Saturday night he started for his home in Toledo, O., where he visits this week, and then goes to New York to rehearse one of the principal parts in Whitney's "My Wife's Family."

## UNION RESCUE MISSION.

Report for Twelve Months of Its Work.

Following is the report of the Union Rescue Mission for the last 12 months:

Two hundred sermons and 28 funerals preached; ministered in 500 homes; 60 conversions; 80 restorations; baptized 5 adults and 3 babies; gave Christmas tree to 400 children; outfit last summer to 100 poor children; rescued nine girls; obtained permanent homes for 15 children; employment for 55 women, 10 girls, 24 men and 16 boys; distributed 2,150 useful articles of clothing and household use; lodged 100 men, 14 women and six children; gave away 250 meals; distributed 6,000 religious papers.

Respectfully submitted with thanks to all contributors.

R. W. CHILES, Pastor.

MRS. IDA B. CHILES, Asst.

## Notice to Contractors.

Bids will be received at the office of the city engineer, in the city of Paducah, Kentucky, up to 3 o'clock, August 25, 1906, for the construction of about seven (7) miles of combined sanitary and storm water sewers, in the city of Paducah, Kentucky.

Plans and specifications will be on file in the engineer's office, in the city of Paducah, Kentucky, after August 15, 1906. A certified check of \$1,000 must accompany each and every bid.

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D. A. YEISER, Mayor.

Paducah, Ky., August 4, 1906.

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